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IVORY'S HOPE

A POEM

BY

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IVORY'S HOPE.

MISS IVORY WHITE was a lovable girl,
As sweet as a rose-bud, as pure as a pearl,
Bright, clever, light-hearted; whatever befell,
Her sunshiny nature seemed always a spell
To charm away care. She had never "come out;"
Her father, a gentleman jovial and stout,
Had built him a country house, stately and tall.
He lived in it Summers and Winters and all.
Here the girl had grown up. All that love, all that wealth
Could provide, had been hers. She had jubilant health;
She drove to perfection, and no one could ride
More boldly than she through the whole country side;
She could handle an oar like a boatman of Venice,
An expert alone could defeat her at tennis,
But Sue Delamere for a visit came down.
When she'd taken herself and her trunks back to town,
Our Ivory altered; long hours she would mope
In dolorous silence, like one without hope,
Or sigh, and remark she'd begun to despair.
Her mother, who watched her with tenderest care,
Soon noticed the change in the girl's disposition,
And quietly sent for the family physician

Who called, listen'd gravely without superciliousness,
Said "Hyperæsthæsia," the while he *thought* "biliousness."
 And took off his gloves to write a prescription,
 For a dose of the very worst tasting description.



"An expert alone could defeat her at tennis."

So Ivory, hating all drugs, thought it better
 To confide in her mother. She showed her a letter
 She'd written to Sue. This had better be given
 In full. It ran

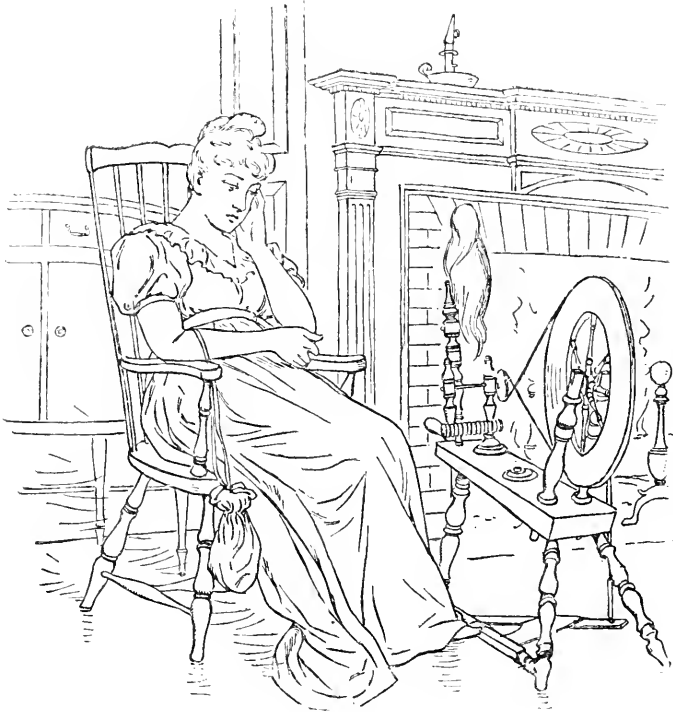
HOME,
August 10th, '87.

“ DEAR SUE:

“ I confess that I'm perfectly dreadful
“ For not writing sooner, but having my head full
“ Of a personal worry, I haven't felt quite
“ Like myself—to be frank, I've been too cross to write—
“ Did you ever suspect I was dreadfully vain?
“ I knew I lacked style, was in most respects plain,
“ Uncultured, and *gauche*; but I thought my complexion
“ In its 'marble-like purity,' simply perfection.
“ And that is the reason this humbug professes
“ Dislike for bright colors—why all her *wash* dresses
“ For Summer are white, unrelieved, just to show
“ Her skin is far whiter,—I thought so, you know.
“ And played the white lily down here in seclusion,
“ Until you arrived to dispel the illusion.
“ Shall I ever forget it—that terrible night!
“ We have just dressed for dinner; you, too, are in white;
“ Arm-in-arm we descend the broad stair-case; we pass
“ And of course take a peep at the big hat-rack glass.
“ Then Truth speaks at last, and speaks in a bellow
“ ‘ Look ! look ! Miss Conceit ! *she* is white, you are yellow.’
“ Each day of your visit the lesson sank deeper.
“ My hands, beside yours, were the hands of a reaper,
“ Rough, freckled, and red; beside yours, how thick
“ My complexion, and sallow ! How heartily sick,

“Of my endless white dresses that once were my pride
“I grew! More than once in some corner to hide
“Tears I could not control, I’d off with a laugh, run,
“Leaving you two alone, for as yellow as saffron,
“Old, limpsy, half-washed seemed the dresses I wore
“While yours were as fresh as the foam on the shore.
“I really believe that’s *one* reason, dear Sue,
“*He* paid such devoted attention to you,
“Scarce glancing at me with indifferent mien.
“Who, *could* like a girl!, if she never looks clean?
“Well, since you’ve been gone, I have scour’d the whole place
“For something to use on my hands and my face
“That would make them like yours. Of washes and lotions,
“All equally worthless, I’ve bought perfect oceans.
“Our laundress, poor Kate, has been dreadfully scolded;
“She quite lost her temper one morning; she folded
“Her arms, and said sharply: ‘Now, Miss it’s all bosh
“Your thinking that *you* can teach *me* how to wash
“I know there’s a stuff that the city folks use
“That helps on the bleaching; I’m sure, if you choose
“To have your things ruined and rotted away,
“It eats them like acid—I’ve nothing to say.
“Kate’s words were suggestive, with quickening hopes
“I made myself poor buying powders and soaps
“Of every description, in endless profusion,
“And each one has proved but a snare, and delusion,
“Each worse than the other. It’s really a sin
“To worry Kate so! When the wash is brought in

“ From the lines, looking awful, her voice is a moan
“ As she wishes Miss Ivory'd let her alone !
“ Dear Sue, wont' you help me—pray, pray, don't refuse !
“ Just sit down and tell me what *is* it you use



“Our Ivory altered, long hours she would mope.”

“ To make your hands soft, your skin pure and clear,
“ And your clothes white as snowflakes ; for, truly, my dear,
“ I am just in despair; now I don't want to trouble you
“ But *do* write *at once* to your
IVORY W.”

P.S. "By the bye I met *him* here to-day.
"Why on earth is he staying? When you went away,



"And quietly sent for the Family Physician."

"I fancied *of course* he would follow, to town.
"He looked very well, quite stalwart and brown.
"He was quiet as ever, said 'how do you do?'—
"It goes without saying, he asked about *you*;

“ Said he'd stopped for the shooting—you know that there's not
“ A thing here to shoot—have you quarrelled, or what? ”
You'll not think our heroine foolish to whimper, the
Case I am sure demands every one's sympathy.
We can live without luxury, live without leisure;
We can live without comfort, can live without pleas
We can live, though it's hard, without even repining
At other men's luck; we *can* live without dining,
Despite Owen Meredith's lines in “ Lucille,”
If at breakfast and luncheon we eat a great deal;
But the rudest of civilized men must confess it, we
Can't live without soap; that's a simple necessity.
Now here is a petted young girl, who, of course, is
Less strong than a man, and with fewer resources
Who only can see, in her future's whole scope
A life without love, and a life without soap.
But let us get forward, restraining our pity!
An answer soon came from her friend in the city.

“ YOU SWEET LITTLE GOOSE:

“ Your long letter I've read

“ *Between* the lines. How you got into your head
“ The notion that Fred cared a penny for me,
“ Except as a friend, I am sure I can't see.
“ He's stayed for the *shooting*! You dear little dunce—
“ Anybody but you would have seen it at once—
“ If he's hunting at all, I'll bet you a fiver, he
“ Is hunting for elephants, that is for IVORY.

“ Do you understand, now? Why, the man is just mad
“ About you, and your loveliness. Wasn't I glad
“ To escape from poor Fred, and those long conversations,
“ When you left us alone? They were simply orations,
“ Full of fervor and passion, with you for their theme;
“ How he'd love you in silence—no fool he, to dream
“ That you the rich heiress, the goddess, the pride
“ Of your sex, and I'm sure I don't know what beside,
“ Would e'er condescend from the regions above
“ To hear his poor common-place story of love.
“ Of course he was trying to pump me, my dear,
“ As to what chance he had—but you acted so queer
“ And offish, I really thought *you* didn't care
“ For him one iota, and so didn't dare
“ To advise him to speak, for if you refused
“ His offer, I knew I'd be nicely abused.
“ But now I've no longer an atom of doubt,
“ Of the state of your feelings; my pet, you've let out
“ Your secret at last, and I write in all haste
“ To tell you how much I admire your good taste,
“ And his, for that matter. You're made for each other
“ I've known Fred so long that he's just like a brother.
“ He'll speak pretty soon. Treat him nicely, now *do*!
“ And write me about it.”

Yours lovingly,

SUE.

“ P.S.” I perceive I've forgotten to touch
“ On the question you asked. Would it trouble you much

- “ If I didn't at all? Well, the wondrous perfection
“ You so kindly admire in my clothes, and complexion
“ Is due to a charm. Shall I tell you its name?
“ I won't; I should feel myself greatly to blame



“To confide in her mother, she showed her a letter.”

- “ For depriving poor Fred of the exquisite pleasure
“ He'll find in your joy, when *he* brings you the treasure.
“ But follow this counsel. When Fred dares to speak,
“ Which he probably will in the course of the week,
“ Just give him this answer,—it will not elate him
“ But never mind that—repeat it *verbatim*:

“ ‘ You ask then for Ivory, this you must do
“ ‘ Before / surrender that Ivory to you;
“ ‘ You must search, you must seek, over land, over sea,
“ ‘ Till the best of all Ivory *you* bring to *me*.’
“ ‘ Sounds silly?’ No matter! Obey me in this
“ And I pledge you a future of unalloyed bliss,
“ The realization of ‘ Ivory’s hope.’
“ Perfection of love, and perfection of soap.”
Another short note mailed by Sue Delamere
That very same morning may serve to make clear
My story:

“ Dear Fred:

I have long been your friend,
“ But our friendship will speedily come to an end,
“ If you longer continue to act like a dunce.
“ You love our pale Ivory. See her at once,
“ And tell her so. Take my advice or you’ll rue it,
“ And whatever she tells you to do, go and *do* it.
“ She will not be hard on you, Fred, never fear!
“ Success to your wooing!

Yours

SUE DELAMERE.”

P.S. “ I’ve just heard from her, Fred, and altho’
“ I ought not to tell you so, that’s how I *know*.”
Miss Delamere’s labor soon brought its reward,
Two notes badly blotted, and much underscored.
One from Ivory came, and the other from Fred,
His she tore open first, and here’s what she read—

“Why what can he mean! What has happened!”—

“See here!

“You’ve played me a pretty trick, Sue Delamere!

“I’m just about crazy! I can’t see for dizziness!

“In Heaven’s name, why *can’t* you mind your own business!



“Our Laundress, poor Kate, has been dreadfully scolded.”

“But never mind that—what I started to write

Is—be sure you’re at home—I *must* see you to-night.”

Poor Sue laid this down with her mind in confusion
And turned to seek comfort, from Ivory’s effusion.

“Oh! how *could* you be, Sue, so *wicked*, so *cruel*

“To a poor, trusting girl who has never done *you* ill?

“ I thought you my *friend*, I *believed* what you said.
“ I’ll *never* forgive you ! I wish I were dead !
“ I was sitting here with my embroidery frame,
“ Pretending to work, when this morning he came
“ And told me he loved me in words strong and sweet,
“ What he said, tho’, to *your* ears I’d scorn to repeat.
“ I smiled, I suppose, for he wanted to fold me to
“ His heart—but I wouldn’t, and said what you told me to.
“ I thought that, of course, it was some little joke
“ That he knew all about. For a minute he spoke
“ Not a word. Then he gave a queer laugh, saying “ Well,
“ I suppose that’s my answer ”—and went. Need I tell
“ How grateful and loving I feel now to you ?
“ Deserted ! heart broken—what, what shall I do !
“ But, remember ! I’ll hate you as long as I live
“ I never will see you, nor ever forgive——”

As Sue turned the page for the rest of her doom
Our heroine herself burst into the room—
She had rushed into town on the earliest train,
Reproaches came fiercely, hot tears fell like rain;
And then came remonstrance, then brief explanation,
Then doubt, next conviction, at last—osculation.
Let us leave them to see what our hero is doing !
By dint of much thought, and ingenious construing
His lady love’s answer, though carefully screening
The “ yes ” that he wanted, began to take meaning
With hope in it—“ Sue is a kind hearted elf
“ Perhaps I’ve been making a fool of myself.

“ Well, certainly ivory’s plenty enough;
“ I’d willingly buy her a ton of the stuff
“ To please her; but what can she mean by the ‘ *best* ! ’
“ There the puzzle begins. Was she trying to test
“ The love that I boasted, my vaunted devotion;
“ To prove me by sending me over the ocean
“ To face in the depths of some African jungle
“ The rush of an elephant? Pshaw! what a bungle
“ I’ve made of the matter! I ought to have done
“ As Sue had advised me, and cheerfully gone
“ Such a queen among women—should marry a *man*,
“ Who has won a name somehow, a fellow she can
“ Respect, and look up to, and feel, as his wife,
“ She’ll be guarded, protected, and shielded through life.
“ With no war on hand, how can I win a name
“ For strength, skill, and pluck, but by hunting big game?
“ What’s the meaning she hid in her answer, I know
“ It may be too late, but, by heaven, I’ll go
“ And get that *best* ivory, ivory *I’ve* won
“ From some raging old bull, with an elephant gun.”
Action followed thought quickly, he settled his bill
At the inn, and set out for the city. His will
He briefly instructed his lawyer to write;
It was short. He left all to Miss Ivory White.
Then went to his club, where he managed to wait
Pretending to dine, until somewhere near eight?
Impatient to keep his engagement with Sue
To ask her forgiveness, and bid her adieu.

Well, the girls were together, the clouds had rolled by;
Sue was quietly knitting, with Ivory nigh.



"To escape from poor Fred and those long conversations."

What had passed is no matter, but Ivory White
Knew Fred would soon be there, and all be set right.
A ring at the door bell. Said Sue: "I am certain
" 'Tis he. 'Tis his hour. Go hide in the curtain."

Fred it was. In an instant, in one breathless sentence
He told of his folly, his wrath, his repentance.
She forgave him at once, and set him before her
With a skein on his hands. He proceeded to bore her
As usual with raptures on Ivory's perfection,
His boundless devotion, unchanging affection;
Of her mystical answer, and how he had read it—
A sob from the curtain Sue heard as he said it—
How gladly he meant to submit to the test
Perhaps he'd be killed, and perhaps 'twould be best.
Then he spoke of his will—but a cry of "Oh, Fred!"
Here came from the curtain, "if you were d-dead
"Do you think *I* could live?" To her true lover's breast
Our Ivory flew like a bird to its nest.
"Oh, Fred, just suppose that you really had gone
"And got yourself killed, and left *me* all alone!"
"But didn't you *tell* me to do it my queen?
"Am I still in the dark? What on earth *did* you mean?"
And Ivory laughing and blushing said "Pooh!
"I meant nothing at all. It was nonsense." Said Sue,
"For that answer of hers you're indebted to me;
"In spite of her bliss there is one thing, you see
"This immaculate damsel still somewhat distresses
"The fact of the matter is this, her wash dresses
"And things are not washed as she'd like them to be
"Her hands, too, are rough. Her complexion, you see,
"Is really quite sallow"—but Fred with a shout,
Stopped her there: "Do you know what you're talking about?"

“She’s fair as a lily.” “Oh, spare us the rest !
“*She* thought so at any rate,—who should know best?—
“And asked me to tell her what I always used
“For the toilet and laundry. Her prayer I refused
“And told her to give you that answer. You dunce !
“I thought you would fathom its meaning at once !
“What I meant, let me say, without further preamble,
“Was the IVORY SOAP made by PROCTOR AND GAMBLE,
“Which for whiteness and purity nothing can equal.
“It was just what she wanted, I knew, and the sequel
“Of my joke was to be, you should make her a present
“Which would be rather funny, and all the more pleasant
“The comfort and ease that the soap would afford her
“Would be, if she owed them to you her adorer.
“But nonsense aside, dear, you really should know
“About Ivory Soap. It is white as the snow.
“It is perfectly pure, and you also should note
“One very great merit it has, it will float.
“It is nicer, and cheaper, and better by far
“For toilet or bath, than the ‘toilet soaps’ are.
“It will keep your hands smooth, it will keep your skin white
“In the laundry you’ll find it a source of delight;
“It acts like white magic in driving out dirt
“Saves rubbing, and tearing, its use cannot hurt
“The most delicate fabric, because it’s so pure
“And has no free alkali. Now I feel sure
“If you use it hereafter, you’ll have no more trouble
“And own that the blessings you owe me are double,

"A husband who loves you, a soap without peer.
"Don't you think that you ought to be grateful, my dear?"
It's time this long story were brought to an end.
Well, well, they were married, and you may depend



"And set him before her, with a skein in his hands."

That Kate whom the girl had so sadly confused
Was their laundress and nothing but "IVORY" used;
Like her mistress, she sounded its praise, as it merited.
Belief in its virtues was largely inherited
The children blow bubbles with IVORY'S SOAP
And entirely fulfilled is our IVORY'S HOPE.

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